

041014Z May 01

CONFIDENTIAL PTQ2167

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ACTION AF-00

INFO LOG-00	AID-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00	SRPP-00	EB-00	EUR-00
VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01	L-00
AC-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	PA-00	PM-00
PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	SSO-00	SS-00	STR-00
TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00	PMB-00	PRM-01	DRL-02	G-00
SAS-00	/009W					

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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8796
INFO NSC WASHDC
DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

CONFIDENTIAL HARARE 001515

SIPDIS

DRL/IL FOR KBRYANT
NSC FOR JFRAZER
ILAB FOR RSHEPHERD
LONDON FOR CGURNEY
PARIS FOR BWILLIAMS
NAIROBI FOR PFLAUMER
PASS USAID FOR AFR/SD - DWELLER, AFR/SA - CPALMA,
NNEMAN, AA/AFR - VDICKSON-HORTON

E.O. 12958: DECL 05/04/11

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TAGS: [ELAB](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: ZIMBABWE LABOR DAY CELEBRATION DISRUPTED BY WAR
VETERANS AND ZANU-PF SUPPORTERS

REF: HARARE 1447

CLASSIFIED BY CHARGE D' AFFAIRES EARL M. IRVING FOR
REASONS 1.5 (B/D).

¶11. (U) THE ZIMBABWE CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS (ZCTU) MAY DAY CELEBRATION HELD AT RUFARO STADIUM IN HARARE ON MAY 1, WITH A CROWD ESTIMATED AT ABOUT 6,000 WORKERS, WAS DISRUPTED BY THE ARRIVAL OF WAR VETERANS AND RULING PARTY SUPPORTERS SHORTLY AFTER THE ZCTU SECRETARY-GENERAL, WELLINGTON CHIBHEBHE, HAD CONCLUDED HIS OPENING REMARKS. THE NEW CHAIRMAN OF THE HARARE WAR VETERANS ASSOCIATION, AND PREVIOUSLY THE SELF-STYLED LEADER OF FARM INVASIONS, JOSEPH CHINOTIMBA, ARRIVED AT THE STADIUM IN A CHAUFFEURED LIMO, WITH ABOUT 1000 ZIMBABWE AFRICAN NATIONAL UNION-PATRIOTIC FRONT (ZANU-PF) SUPPORTERS FOLLOWING IN BUSES. WHEN CHINOTIMBA ENTERED THE STADIUM AND TRIED TO FORCE HIS WAY TO THE STAGE WHERE THE MEMBERS OF THE ZCTU EXECUTIVE WERE SEATED, THERE OCCURRED A STANDOFF BETWEEN MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE (MDC) SUPPORTERS (THE MAJORITY BEING UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE STUDENTS), INTENT ON KEEPING CHINOTIMBA OFF THE STAGE, AND A GROUP OF RULING PARTY YOUTHS BROUGHT IN BY CHINOTIMBA, INTENT ON GETTING HIM TO THE STAGE. HEAVILY ARMED RIOT POLICE HAD TO INTERCEDE TO KEEP THE TWO GROUPS FROM CLASHING.

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¶12. (U) AS THE STANDOFF CONTINUED ON THE FLOOR OF THE STADIUM, THE ZCTU PRESIDENT, LOVEMORE MATOMBO, DECIDED TO GO AHEAD WITH HIS PRESENTATION. HIS ADDRESS HIGHLIGHTED THE MYRIAD PROBLEMS THAT ZIMBABWE'S WORKERS FACE AS THE ECONOMY CONTINUES ITS RAPID COLLAPSE AND THE GOVERNMENT OF ZIMBABWE (GOZ) FAILS TO PROVIDE PROGRAMS OR POLICIES TO HALT THE COLLAPSE OR PROVIDE A SAFETY NET FOR WORKERS. AMONG OTHER ISSUES, MATOMBO HIGHLIGHTED THE NEED FOR A NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE THAT WILL MAINTAIN WORKERS AND THEIR FAMILIES ABOVE THE POVERTY LINE, A DESIRE THAT THE ZCTU BE GIVEN 25 PERCENT OF THE NATIONAL HIV/AIDS LEVY (WHICH IS A TAX ON WORKERS EARNINGS) IN ORDER TO CONDUCT WORKPLACE HIV/AIDS EDUCATION PROGRAMS, AND THE NEED TO ESTABLISH AN INDEPENDENT LABOR TRIBUNAL TO SPEED UP THE RESOLUTION OF LABOR DISPUTES TAKEN TO COURT (NOTE: THERE IS CURRENTLY A FIVE-YEAR BACKLOG OF LABOR CASES IN THE COURTS. END NOTE.)

¶13. (U) AFTER MATOMBO COMPLETED HIS ADDRESS, THE MEMBERS OF THE ZCTU EXECUTIVE LEFT THE STADIUM. CHINOTIMBA WAS THEN ALLOWED ONTO THE STAGE. WHEN HE TOOK THE

MICROPHONE AND BEGAN TO ADDRESS THE CROWD, THE ASSEMBLED WORKERS BEGAN STREAMING FROM THE STADIUM. AT THE BEGINNING OF HIS ADDRESS HE CRITICIZED THE ZCTU FOR NOT LOOKING AFTER THE INTERESTS OF WORKERS, AND ENCOURAGED WORKERS TO TURN TO ZANU-PF FOR ASSISTANCE. THIS WAS MET BY LOUD BOOING FROM THE CROWD AS IT FILED OUT OF THE STADIUM. CHINOTIMBA ENDED UP ADDRESSING ONLY AN ESTIMATED 2,000 PEOPLE, OF WHOM HALF WERE THE ZANU-PF SUPPORTERS WHO HAD BEEN BUSED IN. HE READ OFF A LIST OF COMPANIES THAT THE WAR VETS WOULD SOON BE "VISITING" IN

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HARARE ON WORKERS BEHALF, TO THE CHEERING APPROVAL OF THE BUSED IN ZANU-PF SUPPORTERS.

14. (U) THE MAY DAY CELEBRATION IN HARARE, AND OTHERS IN LARGER CITIES AND TOWNS ACROSS ZIMBABWE, WERE MARKED BY DECREASED ATTENDANCE FROM PRIOR YEARS AS A RESULT OF THE HYPER-CHARGED POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT IN THE COUNTRY, AS WELL AS THE SEVERE ECONOMIC CRISIS, WHICH HAS SEEN TENS OF THOUSANDS OF WORKERS IN THE FORMAL SECTOR LOSE THEIR JOBS AS COMPANIES LAY OFF STAFF OR SHUT DOWN.

15. (C) COMMENT: CHINOTIMBA'S GATE-CRASHING OF HARARE'S MAY DAY CELEBRATION WAS EXPECTED BY THE ZCTU EXECUTIVE. CHINOTIMBA IS SPEARHEADING ZANU-PF'S URBAN CAMPAIGN TO CAUSE DIVISION AND DISSENSION IN LABOR'S RANKS, AND WEAKEN THE ZCTU AHEAD OF THE UPCOMING PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. AS PART OF THIS CAMPAIGN, CHINOTIMBA RECENTLY PROCLAIMED HIMSELF PRESIDENT OF THE ZCTU, ALTHOUGH THIS PROCLAMATION WAS IMMEDIATELY REFUTED BY THE LAWFULLY ELECTED ZCTU PRESIDENT. CHINOTIMBA AND THE WAR VETERANS HE LEADS IN HARARE HAVE BEEN BEHIND THE RECENT INVASIONS OF COMPANIES AND SOME NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN HARARE (REFTEL). THEY HAVE ENTERED BUSINESSES AND SHAKEN DOWN MANAGEMENT, FORCING THEM TO PAY COMPENSATION TO WORKERS WHO HAVE HAD LABOR DISPUTES WITH THESE COMPANIES. WE PREDICT THAT THIS CAMPAIGN IS GOING TO FAIL TO GAIN WIDESPREAD WORKER SUPPORT. WHILE SOME WORKERS WHO HAVE BEEN FIRED OR AGGRIEVED WILL TAKE UP CHINOTIMBA ON HIS OFFER TO EXTRACT SOME EXTRA CASH FROM THEIR FORMER EMPLOYERS, THE MAJORITY OF WORKERS RECOGNIZE THAT IN THE LONG-RUN THESE ACTIONS WILL ONLY

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ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	CIAE-00	INL-00	DODE-00	SRPP-00	EB-00
	UTED-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01	L-00
	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02	PM-00	PRS-00	P-00	SP-00
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	G-00	SAS-00	/007W				

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R 041014Z MAY 01
FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8796
INFO NSC WASHDC
DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 001515

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SHAKEN DOWN MANAGEMENT, FORCING THEM TO PAY COMPENSATION

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ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	CIAE-00	INL-00	DODE-00	SRPP-00	EB-00
	UTED-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01	L-00
	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02	PM-00	PRS-00	P-00	SP-00
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	G-00	SAS-00		/007W			

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R 041014Z MAY 01
FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8797
INFO NSC WASHDC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 HARARE 001515

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TO WORKERS WHO HAVE HAD LABOR DISPUTES WITH THESE COMPANIES. WE PREDICT THAT THIS CAMPAIGN IS GOING TO FAIL TO GAIN WIDESPREAD WORKER SUPPORT. WHILE SOME WORKERS WHO HAVE BEEN FIRED OR AGGRIEVED WILL TAKE UP CHINOTIMBA ON HIS OFFER TO EXTRACT SOME EXTRA CASH FROM THEIR FORMER EMPLOYERS, THE MAJORITY OF WORKERS RECOGNIZE THAT IN THE LONG-RUN THESE ACTIONS WILL ONLY RESULT IN MORE CLOSINGS AND JOB LOSSES. IN ADDITION, THE ZCTU AND ITS AFFILIATED UNIONS ARE HIGHLY ORGANIZED, WITH TWENTY YEARS OF LABOR UNION ACTIVISM BEHIND THEM. THEY ARE ACTIVELY REACHING OUT TO THEIR MEMBERSHIP TO SPREAD THEIR MESSAGE ON POLICY CHANGES NEEDED TO HELP WORKERS, AND IN HIGHLIGHTING THE FAILURE OF THE ZANU-PF-LED GOVERNMENT TO EFFECTIVELY ADDRESS THE ECONOMIC CRISIS. AS A RESULT, THE MAJORITY OF WORKERS REMAIN UNITED BEHIND THEIR UNIONS AND THE ZCTU LEADERSHIP, AND CONTINUE TO STRONGLY SUPPORT THE OPPOSITION MDC. END COMMENT.

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